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4-H CLUBS AND THE COMMUNITY

A radio interview among Miss Lucy Blake, Home Demonstration Agent, Velma Hailman, Club member, Fairfax County, Virginia; William Cockerill, Assistant County Agent, Robert Kirlwood, Club member, Lowden County, Virginia; and John Baker, Radio Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, broadcast Saturday, September 3, 1938, during the National 4-H Club Radio Program of the National Farm and Home Hour, by the National Broadcasting Company and 90 associated radio stations.

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BAKER: Today, our guests of honor come from the State of Virginia. They include a boy and a girl--4-H Club members--a home demonstration agent in one county ---and an assistant county agent in another county. From them, we're going to learn some of the activities of 4-H Clubs over Virginia in community-wide projects.

First of all, perhaps we'd better meet the grown-ups---Miss Lucy Blake, home demonstration agent of Fairfax county---and Mr. William Cockerill, assistant county agent of Loudoun county, Virginia.

Miss Blake---before the program began---you and the others were telling me some most interesting stories of what 4-H Clubs have done in the way of community activities-----I wonder if you won't tell us why 4-H Clubs are interested in doing things for the community.

BLAKE: I'm not sure that I understand just what you mean by that question.

BAKER: Well---why not have the club members limit their activities to their cooking and sewing---raising potatoes and calves---and so on? What's the use of branching out into work that covers the whole community?

BLAKE: Well---the boys and girls who make up a 4-H Club are members of the community in which they live; we want them to feel that they are a part of it---and that they have a responsibility to the community.

COCKERILL: And another thing, Miss Blake---when the boys and girls in a club are working on something that will benefit all of them and their friends and neighbors---the common interest that they have will do a great deal to hold the club together.

BAKER: I suppose that's true enough, Mr. Cockerill. But I might come back and ask---"what's the reason for holding a club together?"

COCKERILL: Well---to answer that, I'll have to go back to one of the basic purposes of 4-H Club work---to train boys and girls to grow up to be better citizens. If they can take part in projects that help them to work together for the good of the entire community when they're still in their 'teens---they'll probably work together for the good of the community when they've grown up.

BAKER: All right then----I think we're getting off to a good start. These 4-H Club projects that have club members working for the entire community are sort of small-scale examples of what older folks might do--and what you hope these club members will do--when they grow up and become voters--and taxpayers.

BLAKE: That's just about it, Mr. Baker.

BAKER: Now let's get down to cases. Miss Blake---why don't you tell us something about the community-wide projects that your 4-H members in Fairfax county have been carrying on.

BLAKE: If you don't mind, Mr. Baker---I'd like to let Velma Hailman, one of our 4-H Club members, tell about the work that the clubs in our county have done in conservation of wild life.

BAKER: Fine. That puts the burden on you, Velma. Which club do you belong to?

VELMA: I belong to the Fairfax Senior Club. We have two clubs in the town-- and 18 clubs in the county.

BAKER: And are they all carrying on some kind of community-wide project--besides the individual projects?

VELMA: Yes indeed. Every club in Fairfax county is doing some kind of work in conservation of wild life. During February and March, every one of our clubs studied nature----and most of us built bird houses. We built almost 300 bird houses last spring and put them up. My own club built a big bird house with a bird feeding station under it and put it in a tree on the court house lawn.

BAKER: Did you get any tenants in this court house bird house?

VELMA: Yes---we had a pair of bluebirds in one part of the house, but the other two parts were empty----I guess bluebirds don't like to have other tenants in the same building.

BAKER: Seems to me I'd heard that, too. But one pair of bluebirds is something. But you said you club members built those 300 houses around over Fairfax county. You don't mean that you girls got out hammers and saws and made bird houses, do you?

VELMA: Of course we did. The girls made almost as many bird houses as the boys. Of course----if we didn't build the houses ourselves we got our brothers to help us. You see---another one of our programs is family activities----doing things where the entire family can work together. And if the girls couldn't build the bird houses themselves---maybe they got their fathers or brothers to work with them.

BAKER: How many bird houses did you build, Velma?

VELMA: We built two or three this year---but in the last several years we've built and put up about a dozen bird houses around our place. We've had wrens, song sparrows, bluebirds---and several other kinds of birds. The houses are always occupied.

BAKER: I wonder if you could tell me why you're interested in birds.

VELMA: Well---I don't know exactly. I've always been interested in birds. I like to hear their songs. We have several mocking birds that nest in trees around home. When the radio is going--or when someone is playing the piano--they come up close and just about sing their hearts out. And I like to watch them fly. Every bird has its own way of flying---and after you've watched them awhile, you get so you can tell the difference between swallows, martins, bluebirds--and other birds---just by the way they fly.

BAKER: Certainly birds are interesting to watch--and to listen to. Is there any other reason why you're interested in them?

VELMA: Birds are one of the best things we have for killing bugs and insects of different kinds. I've read that one bird may eat several hundred insects in a single day. And when you think that almost every bird you see around you eats insects at some time, you can understand how much help the birds are to farmers.

BAKER: And that's important, certainly. Are birds your only interest in nature, Velma?

BELMA: No---I like flowers and trees and animals too. I like to get out in the woods--and almost every time I go out I come back home with a big handful of leaves or flowers or pieces of bark. I bring them home and mount them and look up the names of the things I don't know. Lots of club members in our county do that--and I think more of them are doing it this year----because of the nature study that we had last spring.

BAKER: I suppose you have a 4-H Club camp in Fairfax county, don't you?

VELMA: Yes, of course. I spent two weeks in 4-H camps this summer. We had a nature contest where we went on nature walks and brought back specimens of different kinds. The one who collected the most things and named the most got a subscription to the Virginia Wild Life magazine as a prize. My girl friend and I won the prizes at camp for the best collections.

BAKER: That's fine----congratulations! Now, Velma---what do you expect to gain from your study of nature in 4-H Club work?

VELMA: Well--I don't know that I'll gain anything. However---this summer I'm collecting insects that I know I'll need in biology in school next year. Maybe that will be one thing gained. But the big thing, I guess, is the pleasure that I get out of looking at birds and flowers and trees--and understanding a little more about Nature.

BAKER: I know you've started a hobby, Velma, that will bring you pleasure all your life. Miss Blake---I suppose Velma is typical of the 4-H club girls in your county, isn't she?

BLAKE: Yes, she is, Mr. Baker---and I think Fairfax county is typical of other counties in Virginia in its 4-H conservation work. You see, each county--and its 4-H Clubs--has adopted some community-wide project this year--and in many counties they are doing nature or conservation work. In Botetourt and Appomattox counties, the club members sold conservation stamps--as one effort in support of conservation work. In Botetourt county, one club planted 2,100 pine trees and another club planted 1400 trees. Those were planted along the highway as community beautification projects. Some of the other clubs have shown movies on conservation; others have planted trees and shrubs around school grounds or public buildings. So you see, there's quite a bit of conservation activity in Virginia 4-H Clubs.

COCKERILL: And don't forget about the state conservation camp---held last month. The State Wild Life Federation gave scholarships to the Camp to boys and girls outstanding in nature study work. And you can't tell me that those boys and girls won't do a lot to interest others in wild life when they get back to their own clubs. A great many of them become local leaders back home---and so they pass on to younger 4-H Club members the things they learn at camp.

BAKER: Well that's splendid. Now---Mr. Cockerill---I wonder if you won't introduce the silent member of our firm---this boy who's been standing here---waiting for a chance to say something.

COCKERILL: This is Robert Kirkwood, from Ashburn, Virginia. Bob is one of the boys who has been working in a 4-H garden project there at Ashburn. I think you'll be interested in what he can tell you about that garden, and the way it helps to carry out the Health "H" of the 4-H's. Head, Heart, Hand & Health.

BAKER: All right, Robert-----I expect the rest of the fellows call you Bob, don't they?

ROBERT: That's right.

BAKER: Then if it's all right with you, that's what I'll call you. Tell us something about this 4-H Club garden, Bob.

ROBERT: Well--our 4-H Community garden was started three years ago. This is the fourth season for it. I wasn't a Club member the first year--so I don't know all the details---but I think it was some of the mothers in the Parent-Teacher Association who first got the idea of having a garden near the school. So the garden was started and it's been going ever since.

BAKER: That's a good start. But let's have some of the details, Bob. Who does the work in the garden?

ROBERT: Usually some 4-H Club boy brings his father's team and does the plowing. Then almost all the 4-H Club members help plant the vegetables. This year we have tomatoes, carrots, and green beans. We all take turns cultivating and spraying the beans to keep bean beetles off. As the vegetables get ready--the girls in the club--along with the junior leader and the home demonstration agent--put the vegetables into cans for the winter.

BAKER: That sounds like it would make good eating, Bob-----but just how are these vegetables used?

ROBERT: Well, some of the boys and girls in the school at Ashburn are under weight--and they get a bowl of hot vegetable soup twice a week to go with the lunch they bring from home. The canned vegetables are used in the soup.

BAKER: I see. Only the boys and girls who are under weight get the vegetable soup.

ROBERT: That's right. We have hot soup two days a week and hot cocoa three days with our lunch.

BAKER: You say "we" get the soup and the cocoa. Are you under weight?

ROBERT: Yes--I always have been a little under weight-----so I'm one of the lucky kids who gets a hot lunch at noon. It tastes mighty good on a cold day. All the others say they'd like to be under weight too---so they'd get some hot soup or hot cocoa along with their lunches.

BAKER: You can't blame them for that. But what about results? Have you taken on any weight as a result of these hot dishes at noon?

ROBERT: Well---I haven't. I guess I'm just naturally light weight and not much can be done about it---but I know there's quite a few boys and girls in school who've gained several pounds during the school year because they've had these hot lunches.

BAKER: Then you think it's a pretty good idea---even though it hasn't put much weight on you?

ROBERT: Yes--I do. I think it's done a lot of good for the boys and girls in our school.

BAKER: How much time have you had to spend in the garden, Bob?

ROBERT: Not much. We have a big club--and so that nobody has had to spend a lot of time taking care of the garden. I think I spent about two hours in the garden helping to plant it, and I've gone over a few times this summer and worked for an hour or two, helping with the cultivating and spraying. I live quite a distance from the school, and so I suppose I haven't done quite as much work as some of the other fellows in the club.

BAKER: Well, when you pass the work around that way, it doesn't put too much of a load on any one person. But, Bob---wouldn't it be just as cheap to buy the vegetables already canned, as to raise them?

ROBERT: No -- it wouldn't, Mr. Baker. You see---it takes about 240 quarts of vegetables to make the hot soup that we get during the school year. It would take a good many dollars to buy that. But we can give our work in growing the vegetables and canning them---so it doesn't cost much. We sold five bushels of green beans last year, because we had more than we needed---and I think we'll have more than that to sell this year. We can take the money we got from those beans to buy seed, fertilizer, and glass jars for the next crop. The land is donated-----and the labor is donated-----so we save a lot of money on our community garden and canning project.

BAKER: Then you members of the Ashburn 4-H Club are contributing your labor--and your skill at growing and canning vegetables---to make a saving for the entire community--and to get better meals for some of the under weight boys and girls. Do you think that any other club might try something like that?

ROBERT: Yes--I think it's a good thing for almost any club that can do it.

It does a lot of good for the community. And there are several other schools in Loudoun county where 4-H Clubs are doing the same sort of thing that we're doing. Isn't that so, Mr. Cockerill?

COCKERILL: Yes--that's generally true, Bob. Some of the other schools don't have exactly the same arrangement. One of the common methods of getting vegetables to be used for hot lunches at the school is for the 4-H club members to contribute vegetables that they've raised in their home gardens. They'll bring these to some one place--perhaps the loaders house---and the vegetables will all be canned together.

BLAKE: If you want a few other examples of these school lunches made possible by 4-H Clubs, you'd find them in the Hurt club in Pittsylvania county. They have a community garden there--which I imagine is operated in about the same way as the garden that Bob Kirkwood just told us about--at Ashburn. Then, in Montgomery county, 4-H Club members sponsored a tag day. They didn't raise vegetables themselves, but they did raise \$170, which would buy a great many vegetables. Then, in Fairview, the 4-H Club canned vegetables for the school lunch. And you could find plenty of other examples if you were to travel around over the State.

BAKER: I'm sure of that, Miss Blake. Now---we've had some first hand stories about gardens and school lunches, and nature study and conservation work---all contributions that 4-H Clubs and their members have made to their communities. Is that all that 4-H Clubs in Virginia have done in the way of community-wide activities? How about it, Velma?

VELMA: No it isn't, Mr. Baker. We do a great many other things. The Fairview club in our county--Fairfax county---took over the job of cleaning up the church yard. This is a girls' club--and believe me those girls cleaned house in the church yard. They cut briars, and brush--and honeysuckle vines which had grown all over the place. And in two Saturdays they had it looking much better.

ROBERT: And the Lincoln Club in Loudoun county built a big stone fireplace--- outdoors---and it's a regular community gathering place now. They have club and community picnics of all kinds there. Club members use it a lot---and so does almost every other organization around there.

BLAKE: When you start looking for things that our Virginia 4-H Clubs are doing for their communities, there's almost no end to what you can find. One club went through the community fixing up rural mail boxes--straightening the posts, and putting the names of the owners on them; another club worked with the community home economics club in canning food for the hospital; another club made pillows for their hospital----the Health "H" again.

COCKERILL: Yes---and in Middlesex county--the Urbana 4-H Club promoted a Clean-up week that put almost everybody in the community to work. They got the support of the town council---divided the town up into nine districts with a neighborhood committee of boys and girls in each district---supported by town officials---to supervise the campaign. They gave it a lot of advertising, and all through the town during that week people were hauling trash, raking lawns, painting houses, fences, and buildings, putting in flowers and shrubs. The 4-H Club got the local garden club to judge the improvements that were made in the town, and the family that had made the most improvements in the appearance of its home and grounds was given a nice shrub as a prize. You see--when a 4-H Club sets out to do a job---it does it the way it ought to be done.

BAKER: And one of the big jobs that 4-H Clubs over the country are doing is finding out what needs to be done in a community---and then doing it. Well you folks certainly have told us some interesting stories of community activities among 4-H Clubs in Virginia and thanks to all of you.

You've just met Velma Hailman, from Fairfax; Bob Kirkwood, of Ashburn; Miss Lucy Blake, home demonstration agent of Fairfax county; and William Cockerill, assistant county agent of Loudoun county----a splendid quartet of spokesmen for 4-H Club work in Virginia.

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